

the bold contrast of the scenery, but the picture conveys only a general idea of the beauty of the scene.

After another interesting hour among the clouds, a gentle descent was made to earth at Hadlow Down, the trip lasting 2 hours 26 minutes. To escape, even for a brief interval of a few hours, from the turmoil of London, and to be, in the space of a few minutes, amongst such magnificent scenery as the view above the clouds affords, is one of the greatest fascinations of ballooning, even if one has to be carried where the wind wills.

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THE REFORM OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY.

BEFORE entering upon any discussion of the scheme presented by the Chancellor to the University of Oxford, and of the consequent action taken by the Hebdomadal Council, it is important to make a few introductory remarks on the conditions under which the effort for reform from within is about to be made.

In the first place, there is no question or debate about the inestimable value of collegiate residence. On this point all in Oxford, and it may be hoped all outside it, are agreed. Secondly, the strongest difference of opinion on questions of university policy exists, as it has existed in the past at Oxford, without the least personal feeling. It is useless to attempt to conceal the fact that under the existing system there is and must be conflict between the interests of the university and the colleges, but those who take the strongest line on the one side will be among the first to admit, nay, to proclaim, the devotion and self-sacrifice which are brought to the support of the other. In many cases, indeed, a university policy is most firmly sustained by men whose interests are bound up with the colleges. The question is what is best for Oxford, and through Oxford for the Empire, and to hold a strong opinion in such a controversy does not weaken a loyal and sympathetic cooperation with those who maintain the opposite position.

The point of view which will be maintained in the present article, and from which the Chancellor's book and the resolutions of Council will be examined, is that of the university as opposed to the colleges. We maintain that Oxford will gain as a seat of research and learning and in its influence—already beneficial in the highest degree—on the lives of its students by restoring to the university much of its ancient power and authority, and by leaving the colleges as dignified and historic homes, where, if teaching is carried on at all, it will be under the control of the university.

The first series of resolutions deals with the three governing bodies of the university—Convocation (M.A.'s who retain their names on university and college books), Congregation (such M.A.'s residing within a mile and a half of the centre of Oxford), and the Hebdomadal Council. This latter important body, by which alone legislation can be initiated in Congregation and Convocation, consists of three *ex-officio* members, the Vice-Chancellor and the two Proctors, and eighteen members elected by Congregation. Of these eighteen, six must be heads of colleges, six professors, and six M.A.'s. The power of Council will be best understood by the statement that, except on its initiative, no modification can be made in the existing examination system, no expenditure of a sum exceeding 100l.; no loan to a reader of book or manuscript out of the Bodleian Library.

It is impossible in the brief compass of a single article to do more than sketch the broadest outlines, but it is submitted that details here necessarily omitted do not substantially modify the accuracy of the pic-

ture suggested to the reader. Thus Congregation includes, but is not substantially affected by including, a complex list of *ex-officio* members; the Chancellor is a member of Council, but is very rarely present; the Bodleian has the power of lending to the Radcliffe Library, and consequently to the readers of the latter.

Lord Curzon proposes that the three categories of Council should be given up, and Council itself has resolved so far as possible "to abolish or modify the existing division into three orders." There is no doubt that the power of the university would be seriously weakened by the abolition of the professorial category unless provision be made for university representation of some other kind. The heads are collegiate appointments, for even at Christ Church, the headship of which is in the gift of the Crown, it is customary to select a Dean from the governing body. In addition to the power given to the colleges by the presence of the six heads on Council, it should be remembered that the Vice-Chancellor must, under the present constitution, be the head of a college. The Oxford of an older day, with its greater leisure and greater freedom, gave to the colleges heads almost invariably picturesque and sometimes inspiring. In an organisation mainly developed with reference to the rush and tumble of the modern race for first-classes between the colleges, the headship of the future will generally be, if not the retiring pension, at least the pension of a retiring tutor or bursar. If it be impossible to modify this system, an effort should be made to render the income of the position more commensurate with its duties. A small increase of stipend would amply compensate for the loss of much drudgery and an acceptance of the dignified and not exacting position of chairman. In these circumstances, too, it would be beneficial to abolish the category of heads in Council and the custom of necessarily selecting the Vice-Chancellor from among the heads. For ourselves, however, we should greatly prefer to leave the emoluments and the university status of the heads unchanged, but to give the university a voice in their appointment. Among the headships are some of the few fairly well paid posts in Oxford, and it would be an immense gain to the university, and an even greater gain to the colleges, if it were generally understood that they should be filled by men for whom leisure and opportunity, and the release after long service from teaching, would mean more time spent and greater efforts made in the cause of learning.

The two Proctors, popularly supposed to be mainly concerned with the behaviour of undergraduates outside their college walls, are in reality the representatives of the M.A.'s, and in this capacity hold their *ex-officio* seats on Council as well as on nearly all the important boards of the university. Lord Curzon's proposal that they should serve for two years, and go out of office in rotation, would undoubtedly facilitate business, but is open to criticism for the following reason. The educating effect of a proctorship is remarkable. It is an important advantage that every year a member of the governing body of two colleges should learn by personal experience that the University of Oxford is something more than a name. The Proctors certainly do learn this lesson, and a man who has held the office, although only for one year, looks on his university with different eyes. We should seriously question the wisdom of reducing the number of those who receive so illuminating an experience. The principle of Lord Curzon's proposal would be carried into effect and its main advantages secured by rotation with a half-yearly period.

That Congregation should be restricted to those

M.A.'s who perform academic functions (Resolution ii., *b*) is, like many another desirable reform, merely a return to the original intention. It was proposed by Council a few months ago, but rejected by a small majority in Congregation. We may now hope and believe that with the support of the Chancellor and the renewed support of Council it will become an actual fact. The academic functions here suggested as qualifying for membership of Congregation are "teaching and administrative." Of course, all academic teaching to be valuable must be associated with research, and "teaching" was doubtless intended to be read in this sense; but in England it is unfortunately still premature to trust to the general acceptance of such an interpretation.

We do not touch on the tremendous and perhaps rather barren problem of the reform of Convocation. It is possible that, with greatly increased powers conferred on the Boards of Faculties, the consideration of this much disputed and very intricate question might advantageously be postponed.

The principle strongly advocated by the Chancellor and adopted in Resolution iii., *a*, "that Greek be no longer required as a necessary subject for a degree in Arts," was some years ago accepted by Council and successfully brought before Congregation, although the subsequent attempt to introduce a definite scheme was attended with failure. It is difficult to understand the feelings of those students of the noblest of all languages and all literatures in attaching so much value to the miserable and irritating minimum now required. It is sometimes said that the scientific student, requiring to propose new terms, would be benefited by possessing a knowledge of Greek, but it would be disastrous to the interests of language were he, with a hundredfold the experience, to make the attempt. The field is a very dangerous one, and full of pitfalls even for the most accomplished scholars. It is also said that the Englishman without Greek would find difficulty in understanding the meaning of numbers of English words. The answer is obvious. The moderate number of Greek words which are used over and over again in English should be taught as part of that most important, most neglected branch of a boy's education—his own language.

The principle of an entrance examination (iii., *b*) preliminary to matriculation would relieve the university from its present undignified position, compelled as it is to matriculate any and every student presented by a college.

The Chancellor's principle of a Board of Finance, accepted by Council in Resolution iv., is of the highest importance. Indeed, this principle alone may go far to secure the dominant influence of the university. It is to be presumed that the board will possess the power of preventing the waste of funds by unnecessary duplication of teaching no less than by unnecessary or extravagant buildings. Of equal importance is the cooperating principle accepted in Resolution v., "that some reconstitution of the faculties and boards of faculties should take place, with a view to the more systematic and economical organisation of university and college teaching." It is to be hoped that the reconstituted boards, with the addition of a Council of the Faculties, may relieve the Hebdomadal Council of the entire examination system, propose names for honorary degrees, advise the board of finance in the administration or control of the combined tuition fees, appoint all lecturers, and exercise advisory powers in the appointment of tutors.

Resolution vii., appointing a committee "to consider and confer with the colleges as to the emoluments and tenure of senior scholarships and of fellow-

ships," is of almost equal importance to that of the two resolutions last touched upon. It is to be regretted that the whole system of prize-fellowships as instituted by the last commission, including the award by examination, was not condemned. It is sometimes said that it is such a good thing for politics, the Bar, and journalism that an able young man should be supported during the early barren years. No doubt it is a very good thing. Then let politics, the Bar, and journalism see to it. While there are capable students unable to pursue their researches in Oxford for the want of such funds, it is a scandalous abuse of academic endowment that they should be used in London to smooth the path to a professional career.

With regard to the following proposals made in resolutions of which the numbers are quoted, we need say no more on the present occasion than that they command our entire sympathy and approval:—The reconsideration of the scheme of college scholarships and exhibitions (vi.), an improvement in the executive machinery of the university (vii.), a better constitution of electoral boards to professorships (x.), and the provision, if possible, of a professorial pension scheme (xi.), a reconsideration of university and college fees (xiii.), and a discussion as to the possibility of reducing the expenses of living in college (xiv.)

There remains, however, one important reform which touches closely the dignity of the university. Oxford ought to regain its ancient long-lost power of admitting students, just as Berlin or Paris admits them, without compelling them to join any other body. If a senior American or Continental student now desires to work in Oxford under a professor, and to become for the time a member of the university, the authorities can only reply that he must first arrange to attach himself to a college or to the body of non-collegiate students. The situation is so strange to those accustomed to the ways of other universities that the student would probably in most cases be invited to work without joining the university, which thus loses the fees he is willing to pay and much of the distinction conferred by his researches. A proposal to admit such students to the university only just failed to pass Council a few years ago, and then only in consequence of opposition raised on behalf of the non-collegiate students. It is possible that the advantages of a collegiate title to express what has from the first been a reality would conciliate much of this opposition. It would be a wise policy to admit frankly that the non-collegiate body, in everything except residence within the walls of a college, possesses a collegiate structure, to adopt the name "St. Catherine's College," and to let the clumsy title "non-collegiate student" go the way of the older and even less desirable term "unattached." We might then reasonably hope that some benefactor interested in hard work and economical living at the university would be glad to erect a building where all the immense advantages of corporate life would be conferred on a large and deserving body of the poorer students. In such a college, if well managed, living ought to be considerably cheaper than in "licensed lodgings" in the city. In this way we believe that "the improvement of the position of non-collegiate students" sought by the Chancellor and by Council (in Resolution ix.) can best be brought about.

We have said enough to show how wide-reaching and remarkable, and, as we believe, beneficent, is the scheme of reform presented to Oxford University by the Chancellor. Not less remarkable is the effect it has already produced upon a seat of learning sometimes described, in old days perhaps correctly, but now with singular inaccuracy, as "sunk in port wine and prejudice."